



SEIUHealthcare®
United for Quality Care

February 28, 2023

SEIU 1199NE

Jennifer Bazzano

Manchester, CT

Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Jennifer Bazzano, I live in Manchester, and work as a Direct Support Assistant (DSA) at the Mosaic group home in West Hartford. I come before you today to urge you to fund group homes properly.

As a DSA I assist the individuals we care for with all their daily needs. This includes taking showers, getting dressed, eating meals, taking them to doctors appointments, and taking them on community outings. We celebrate their birthdays with them and do our best to make holidays special. I truly love the individuals I work with. I love their innocence. They are the reason I go to work everyday.

Unfortunately, group homes like mine are struggling with understaffing, low wages, and a lack of resources. The ratio of individuals to caregivers is unsustainable. We do not have enough staff to care for our individuals in the way they deserve, and because of this we are forced to work overtime every week. Management doesn't help with direct care either.

The pay we earn is not enough either. We work long hours every week just to barely get by. Many of us are working two or three jobs, which leaves us even more burnout and exhausted for our next shift. I don't even have energy to spend time with my family when I'm not working. How are we supposed to take care of our individuals, when we cannot take care of ourselves?

Another issue related to underfunding is inadequate supplies. We don't have proper equipment for taking care of our individuals. We don't have hospital beds, shower chairs, or gait belts. This is a direct result of underfunding.

With adequate levels of funding group homes could hire more staff and be able to pay them a living wage. This will not only reduce burnout amongst staff, but it will help group homes attract and retain caregivers. Ultimately, more funding for group homes means individuals will get better care and have a greater quality of life.

Instead of looking at this issue as a matter of money, let's look at it as a matter of morality. Our individuals deserve better as do we as caregivers. Please fully fund group home services.

Thank you.